

Bureau of Land Management, Interior

§ 3809.202

under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.* and assigned clearance number 1004-0194. BLM will use this information to regulate and monitor mining and exploration operations on public lands.

§ 3809.116 As a mining claimant or operator, what are my responsibilities under this subpart for my project area?

(a) Mining claimants and operators (if other than the mining claimant) are liable for obligations under this subpart that accrue while they hold their interests.

(b) Relinquishment, forfeiture, or abandonment of a mining claim does not relieve a mining claimant's or operator's responsibility under this subpart for obligations that accrued or conditions that were created while the mining claimant or operator was responsible for operations conducted on that mining claim or in the project area.

(c) Transfer of a mining claim or operation does not relieve a mining claimant's or operator's responsibility under this subpart for obligations that accrued or conditions that were created while the mining claimant or operator was responsible for operations conducted on that mining claim or in the project area until—

(1) BLM receives documentation that a transferee accepts responsibility for the transferor's previously accrued obligations, and

(2) BLM accepts an adequate replacement financial guarantee adequate to cover such previously accrued obligations and the transferee's new obligations.

[65 FR 70112, Nov. 21, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 54860, Oct. 30, 2001]

FEDERAL/STATE AGREEMENTS

§ 3809.200 What kinds of agreements may BLM and a State make under this subpart?

To prevent unnecessary administrative delay and to avoid duplication of administration and enforcement, BLM and a State may make the following kinds of agreements:

(a) An agreement to provide for a joint Federal/State program; and

(b) An agreement under § 3809.202 which provides that, in place of BLM administration, BLM defers to State administration of some or all of the requirements of this subpart subject to the limitations in § 3809.203.

§ 3809.201 What should these agreements address?

(a) The agreements should provide for maximum possible coordination with the State to avoid duplication and to ensure that operators prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands. Agreements should cover any or all sections of this subpart and should consider, at a minimum, common approaches to review of plans of operations, including effective cooperation regarding the National Environmental Policy Act; performance standards; interim management of temporary closure; financial guarantees; inspections; and enforcement actions, including referrals to enforcement authorities. BLM and the State should also include provisions for the regular review or audit of these agreements.

(b) To satisfy the requirements of § 3809.31(b), if BLM and the State elect to address suction dredge activities in the agreement, the agreement must require a State to notify BLM of each application to conduct suction dredge activities within 15 calendar days of receipt of the application by the State. BLM will inform the State whether Federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed activities and any necessary mitigating measures. Operations must not begin until BLM completes consultation or conferencing under the Endangered Species Act.

§ 3809.202 Under what conditions will BLM defer to State regulation of operations?

(a) *State request.* A State may request BLM enter into an agreement for State regulation of operations on public lands in place of BLM administration of some or all of the requirements of this subpart. The State must send the request to the BLM State Director with jurisdiction over public lands in the State.

(b) *BLM review.* (1) When the State Director receives the State's request, he/she will notify the public and provide an opportunity for comment. The State Director will then review the request and determine whether the State's requirements are consistent with the requirements of this subpart, and whether the State has necessary legal authorities, resources, and funding for an agreement. The State requirements may be contained in laws, regulations, guidelines, policy manuals, and demonstrated permitting practices.

(2) For the purposes of this subpart, BLM will determine consistency with the requirements of this subpart by comparing this subpart and State standards on a provision-by-provision basis to determine—

(i) Whether non-numerical State standards are functionally equivalent to BLM counterparts; and

(ii) Whether numerical State standards are the same as corresponding numerical BLM standards, except that State review and approval time frames do not have to be the same as the corresponding Federal time frames.

(3) A State environmental protection standard that exceeds a corresponding Federal standard is consistent with the requirements of this subpart.

(c) *State Director decision.* The BLM State Director will notify the State in writing of his/her decision regarding the State's request. The State Director will address whether the State requirements are consistent with the requirements of this subpart, and whether the State has necessary legal authorities, resources, and funding to implement any agreement. If BLM determines that the State's requirements are consistent with the requirements of this subpart and the State has the necessary legal authorities, resources, and funding, BLM must enter into an agreement with the State so that the State will regulate some or all of the operations on public lands, as described in the State request.

(d) *Appeal of State Director decision.* The BLM State Director's decision will be a final decision of BLM and may be appealed to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, but not to the Department of the Interior

Office of Hearings and Appeals. The items you should include in the appeal are the same as the items you must include under § 3809.802.

[65 FR 70112, Nov. 21, 2000, as amended at 68 FR 32656, June 2, 2003]

§ 3809.203 What are the limitations on BLM deferral to State regulation of operations?

Any agreement between BLM and a State in which BLM defers to State regulation of some or all operations on public lands is subject to the following limitations:

(a) *Plans of Operations.* BLM must concur with each State decision approving a plan of operations to assure compliance with this subpart, and BLM retains responsibility for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The State and BLM may decide who will be the lead agency in the plan review process, including preparation of NEPA documents.

(b) *Federal land-use planning and other Federal laws.* BLM will continue to be responsible for all land-use planning on public lands and for implementing other Federal laws relating to the public lands for which BLM is responsible.

(c) *Federal enforcement.* BLM may take any authorized action to enforce the requirements of this subpart or any term, condition, or limitation of a notice or an approved plan of operations. BLM may take this action regardless of the nature of its agreement with a State, or actions taken by a State.

(d) *Financial guarantee.* The amount of the financial guarantee must be calculated based on the completion of both Federal and State reclamation requirements, but may be held as one instrument. If the financial guarantee is held as one instrument, it must be redeemable by both the Secretary and the State. BLM must concur in the approval, release, or forfeiture of a financial guarantee for public lands.

(e) *State performance.* If BLM determines that a State is not in compliance with all or part of its Federal/State agreement, BLM will notify the State and provide a reasonable time for the State to comply.

(f) *Termination.* (1) If a State does not comply after being notified under paragraph (e) of this section, BLM will take